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# **European construction and the Mediterranean region: neighbourhood policy or common project?**

**Bruno Amoroso**



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## **European construction and the Mediterranean region: neighbourhood policy or common project?**

*Bruno Amoroso*

### **From the Declaration of Barcelona in 1995 to European Neighbourhood Policy in 2005**

The ten years that have passed from the start of the Process of Barcelona constitute an occasion for analysis, reflection and appraisal of the events that have filled this period and of the achieved or unfulfilled objectives. Occasions for encounter have not been lacking in the course of 2005.

The 35 foreign affairs ministers of the European Union (EU) and the Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPs) decided in the course of the meeting at The Hague, 29-30 November 2004, to convene an extraordinary conference (Barcellona+10) at government level to be held in Barcelona in November 2005, in order to celebrate the decennial of the declaration and to "reinvigorate Euro-Mediterranean relations".

The European Commission declared 2006 to be the "year of the Mediterranean". In tandem, other initiatives convoked by civil society and other important institutional players have been carried out, such as the Conference of Mediterranean Universities at Tarragona in June 2005, and the Mediterranean Social Forum in Barcelona in June 2005.

The second Barcelona Conference was held as planned in November 2005 and has been a failure. The Arab states were represented by low-level representatives and it ended with a split among European and Arab states. The reasons for this failure are various. The EU was represented by Tony Blair, in charge of the EU Presidency, certainly not the most appropriate person to chair such a meeting. At the first Barcelona Conference, the EU was represented the Vice-president Solana and therefore his good practice could have been applied again. Moreover, the unilateral decision to start the European Neighbourhood Policy could not be interpreted other than a disengagement of the EU towards the Mediterranean countries and the common project of Barcelona. It would be better therefore for the countries of the south to get down from a useless table of negotiations in order to play their own cards in bilateral relationships. Finally, the agenda of the Conference, prepared by Tony Blair, had many topics to deal with, namely terrorism, terrorism and terrorism... in whose name it envisaged

measures that clearly open the road to even stronger intrusions than those put into effect towards the Arab countries to date. This is a position that surely sees both the governments as well as the opposition of these countries to be consenting in their negative response. In a word, a conference prepared with an evident spirit of arrogance and incompetence on the political relationships of the area, which abandoned that spirit of cooperation that had, in spite of everything, prevailed in 1995. The advantage for Europe of the absence of high level delegations from the Arab countries is that this has avoided the risk of even more dramatic and significant breaches. The new European Neighbourhood Policy launched by the EU, which has raised comprehensible worries between MPs and the observatories, takes its origin in the Treaty Plan for the European constitution presented to the President of the European Council in July 2003.

These events are interwoven with other important institutional engagements, such as the ratification of the European Constitution, currently in progress, whose outcome may also produce effects on Euro-Mediterranean relationships. In fact, the new European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) launched by the EU, which has raised comprehensible worries between the MPs and observers, draws its origin from the Treaty Project establishing a European constitution presented to the president of the European Council in July 2003.

The new policy comprises all the countries, near and far, that the EU intends addressing in order to establish relationships in the framework of strengthening political and economic cooperation, security and culture. The countries expressly mentioned are Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and all the MPs.

The ENP is set in a general framework of international relationships of the EU, that has been strongly modified by its recent decisions of enlargement and growing alignment toward the Atlantic positions of foreign policy.

15 countries of the EU and 12 MPs met at Barcelona. Today, respectively 25 and 9 countries are to be found facing each other. Some of the countries that were found among the MPs at Barcelona (for tactical choice of the EU) are now in the group of the "candidate" countries (3), of the potential candidates (8) and of "near" countries (16, of which 9 MPs).

The "near" countries do not have well defined common characteristics, as is the case for the MPs, from a historical, political, cultural and geographical point of view. The methodologies are also diverse, based on bilateral relationships, at times treated in terms of competition between the countries.

The Mediterranean, from being identified in the Declaration of Barcelona of 1995 as the strategic axis of a European construction that saw the fulcrum of its own history and multiversi inspiration in this region, as well as the place of experimentation and demonstration of European diversity with respect to a model of western colonization, is today drawn back inside the European Neighbourhood Policy, namely diluted in that disordered archipelago of countries placed around the "centre", both European and western, towards which

policies of neighbourliness are to be put into effect for the ends of “stabilization” and political “control”.

The consequences of this change are surely multiple and have not gone unnoticed. It is surprising that an Agreement (of Barcelona) solemnly signed by the heads of state of the countries of the UE and the southern shores, based on the principle of partnership and sharing, has been cancelled with a unilateral initiative, neither discussed nor agreed upon by the other countries participating at the Agreement. Surely not a positive example of good practice in terms of democracy and participation.

This decision was accompanied by the affirmation that in the future the UE will be able to make agreements of collaboration with the near countries that decide to introduce “values” or “policies” of the UE (“acquis communautaire”), but without any possibility (hope) of being able to arrive thereafter at sharing the institutions governing the EU (“everything but institutions”, according to Romano Prodi’s formulation).

A wall has therefore been set up between the member countries and the near countries, which cuts through all the relationships of collaboration and integration already started in the major European regions between the member countries and the others. This is the case of the Baltic Countries with their imitative of integration with the Nordic Countries and Russia, and of the south European countries with their multiple ties towards other Mediterranean countries.

It is surely no surprise that an attentive author on the Mediterranean such as Pietro Barcellona, who had written on the “Mediterranean as a sacred place” states that: “There is no Europe without the Mediterranean and there is no Mediterranean without Europe”<sup>1</sup>, has today updated his analysis with the recent: “Suicide of Europe”.<sup>2</sup>

This “unilateral” shift of the EU radically modifies the guidelines that had inspired the strategies around two central benchmarks for decades: the policies of social cohesion inside and policies of economic cooperation towards the contiguous regions (Wider Europe).

A structured approach, of meso-regional and multilateral type geo-economic and geopolitical relationships, as alternatives to the destabilizing effects of globalization, is now shifted towards a fragmentation of interventions and policies towards the single states, whose only points of reference are the economic interests and security of a unilaterally defined and administered EU.

In such a way, the EU abandons its own way of being that has constituted the basis for the creation of the European Social Model, and makes globalization and competitiveness (rivalry) its main priorities and choices. Within this new framework, European thought and policies become subsidiary with respect to the choices of the capitalistic Triad (globalization) and its global policeman (the United States).

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1 Barcellona Pietro, *Le passioni negate*, Città Aperta, Troina, 2001

2 Barcellona, *Il suicidio dell’Europa*, Dedalo Bari, 2005

The strong signals of this <Atlantic> drift of Europe - of an opposite trend to those that had determined its birth, namely the objectives of economies of peace, respect for the sovereignty and independence of nation states, and of sustainability to be achieved by transforming the rivalry and competition between European states into cooperation and synergies - were all present, and in turn pointed out, in the Lisbon Agenda of 2000.

In that document the long-term objectives of the growth of the EU were established and the directions for the European policies of growth and competition affirmed, constituting the guidelines of what was to become the “strategic dimension of the European space” on Eurocentric positions and cultural colonialism.<sup>3</sup>

The adhesion of European trade unions to the Lisbon Agenda was justified by the parts of the document recalling social objectives and employment. What was not wished to be seen, however, was that this happened in a context of competitiveness at a global level not subjected to but rather demanded, and in an approach of foreign policy and international cooperation that by now was pushing towards a perspective of “Global Apartheid” within which the objective of rights and social equity cannot fail to be anything than distorted.<sup>4</sup>

The passage from Lisbon Agenda, that aligns the economic policies of the Union to those of capitalist globalization (to the detriment of internal social cohesion), to the “European Neighbourhood Policy”, that inserts the EU into Atlantic strategies of expansion and global control (to the detriment of European co-development policies), was managed by the Presidency of the Commission by means of a series of transitions whose main steps were the EU Maastricht Treaty (1992), the Stability and Growth Pact (1996), Single Currency (2002), up until the Treaty for the European Constitution (2004).

This kind of triumphant march towards an ever closer union is producing the opposite effects to those desired, namely a situation of growing popular opposition and institutional collapse of the Union. The supplement of *The Economist* on Outgrowing the Union of 25 September 2004 concludes with the forecast of a “Europe à la carte”, owing to the increasing malaise of Europeans with respect to a model of Eurocentric and western integration.

## European Union and the Mediterranean

The “collapse of the wall” in 1989, that together with the end of the Cold War could have provided the chance to resume the process of European unification based on polycentrism, was very soon transformed into a shift towards the east and to the south, with the destabilization of those areas with respect to new heralded conflicts against the Far East.

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3 "The International Dimension of the European Research Area", COM (2001) 346 final, 25.6.2001, Brussels, 25.6.2001.

4 Amoroso Bruno, *Apartheid Globale*, ed. Lavoro, Roma 1999

The result was the drive of the interests of strong European countries (Germany and England together with the Scandinavian countries) to insert the countries of central and northern Europe in the Union inside a protective belt of its eastern borders subject to their control, easily conquered thanks to the greater docility shown by these countries in accepting and putting into effect the conditions foreseen for integration into the EU.

These events have reopened the practice of negotiations and bilateral agreements, with the abandonment of the meso-regional approach of the 90s and the geopolitical strategy of the Wider Europe that had introduced a method of multilateral relationships.

Of the two spirits that are always present in Euro-Mediterranean relationships, namely of those who mainly see these in a context of emergency due to the risks that the area represents for European countries owing to the three bombs needing to be defused (the Muslim, demographic and atomic bombs), and those who instead underline the opportunities for Europe to regenerate itself culturally and economically by means of fecundation with its own neighbours, it is certainly the former vision that has prevailed.

This change is the arrival point of a wearing down of the cultures and efforts of more than a decade that began with the Gulf War and, subsequently, European aggression against Yugoslavia. A war, this latter, justified with the need to intervene in the “Yugoslavian tragedy” that precisely the European states had nurtured because of the diversities of the “vital interests” perceived and pursued by every state.

Notwithstanding the attempts made to find a balanced relationship between these two approaches<sup>5</sup>, the countries of the south have increasingly been seen as the source of risks from which it is necessary to defend oneself and the concept of “security” and “military threat”, typical of NATO language, has become enriched with that of “economic and social risks” reflected in the “new model of Italian defence” since 1991.

The lengthy work carried out on interdependencies and cooperation for a serious critical reconsideration of European productive systems, was therefore interrupted and guided towards an argument on the vulnerability of European countries and the requirement to defend their “vital interests” also when threatened beyond the frontiers.

This blinds every effort for innovation with the bending towards the defence of “acquired rights” by Europe in protecting economic, political and institutional relationships, which instead had and still have the need to be raised again in debate and deeply transformed.<sup>6</sup>

An incisive and careful observer of European Union Mediterranean policies, Andrea Amato highlights, commenting on those events, that:

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<sup>5</sup> See the *Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe*

<sup>6</sup> Bernard Ravenel, *Méditerranée, l'impossible mur*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1995.



“Common security” is increasingly seen as a utopia of the past. Europe is today inclined to identify its security with its prosperity — a prosperity increasingly threatened by its neighbours. If, on one hand, this means closing the doors of “Fortress” Europe, a policy of security defined by the member states of the Union in national terms, on the other hand it means maintaining the economic advantages based on the disparity in the relationships with the southern countries—a status quo to be conserved at all costs, even by supplying military assistance to the elites in power in these countries.<sup>7</sup>

The road embarked upon marks a resumption of the north-south relationships in the Mediterranean along the route of the traditional north-south economic relationships (arms against oil), and excludes every form of economic and institutional evolution in the southern countries (south-south relationships and institutional modifications decided by the populations of these countries) that may threaten the consolidated relationships of Europe in those areas.<sup>8</sup>

However, the 90s also saw the blooming of studies and analyses that throw light on the unsustainability of these developments due to the exponential growth of social imbalances between the two sides of the Mediterranean. The CNEL reports on the Mediterranean published during 1991-2001, critically document and analyze the data of that decade and have also found confirmation in the analyses of international agencies.<sup>9</sup>

The Mediterranean was heading towards a social and political drift that heralded the conflict of civilization between the two shores, between the Arab world in its various national articulations and Europe.<sup>10</sup>

The Conference and the Declaration of Barcelona in 1995 represented the result of an elaboration in parallel to these events but for many aspects it contrasted them.<sup>11</sup> However, their weight heavily influenced the outcome by restricting participation to the Mediterranean countries of the south “side”, in order to counterbalance the natural power of the Arab countries with the presence of Malta, Cyprus, Israel and Turkey, and excluding the Balkans.

The final Declaration affirmed the commitment to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership on three points of the program:

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<sup>7</sup> Amato Andrea,

<sup>8</sup> Andrea Amato, “Le politiche della CE per i paesi del Mediterraneo: dall’eurocentrismo alla cooperazione regionale”, in *Da mosaico a regione*, Rubettino, Catanzaro, 1993.

<sup>9</sup> I. Divan and L. Squine, “Economic and Social Development in the Middle East and North Africa”, Discussion Paper Series no. 3, World Bank, October 1992. TAD-EC Commission, General Directorate XXVI, “Impact sur le développement régional et l’aménagement de l’espace communautaire des pays du Sud et de l’Est Méditerranéen (PSEM)”, Paris, 1992.

<sup>10</sup> Amoroso, *Europa e Mediterraneo*, Dedalo Bari.

<sup>11</sup> The Euro-Mediterranean intergovernmental conference held on 27-28 November 1995. The participants at the Barcelona Conference comprised the UE, represented by Vice president Manuel Marin, the Council, represented by the President at the time Javier Solana, the ministers of the countries of the 15 EU member states and the 12 third Mediterranean countries (TMC) —Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey and the Palestinian Authority (represented by Yasser Arafat). The countries of the south included 11 of the 12 TMC countries with which the EC had already undertaken aid and cooperation agreements from the 60s and 70s. The country absent from the conference was Yugoslavia and the new participant was the Palestinian Authority. Note that diction “states”, used to designate European countries, and “partner”, for the countries of the southern shores, have only been created in order to gain Israel’s refusal to accept the diction “state” for the Palestinian state. Another missed opportunity for the Barcelona Conference.

1. Policy and security partnership for the creation of a common area of peace and stability, to be pursued through political dialogue and the sharing of principles and objectives of international law.
2. Economic and financial partnership for an area of common prosperity, to be put into effect by: a) the gradual realization of an area of free exchange between the countries of the EU and the 12 countries of the southern shores; b) the realization of programs of cooperation and aid in agreed areas and fields; c) increased financial aid of the EU to the Mediterranean partner countries.
3. Social, cultural and human partnership, in order to favour the development of human resources and understanding and the exchange between cultures.

The results achieved by the Conference of Barcelona with this Declaration, that constitutes the first multilateral agreement signed between the EU and the countries of the south shores, testify to the effort to strengthen the EU Mediterranean policies of co-development and to resist the climate up to then pursued by the policies of European governments and the European Union. A shift that has been interpreted by some as the result of a rhetorical forcing that would have prevailed on the circumspect weave of policies of control and containment of the area.<sup>12</sup>

### **The historical roots of the Barcelona process**

The Barcelona process was characterized with respect to other policies and agreements, by its all-inclusive nature – economic and cultural – and should therefore be evaluated in all its aspects. The outcomes and appraisals are numerous and concordant and it is possible therefore to offer a synthesis here by recalling the three points of the program.

#### *1. Policy and Security Partnership for the creation of a common area of peace and stability.*

To attribute the increasing social and political conflicts and military aggressions against the Arab countries to the failure of Barcelona would be ungenerous. In truth, though, it is much worse. These wars and confrontations would not have been possible without Europe's acceptance of the integration into capitalistic globalization and its positioning in tow to the policies of war by the United

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<sup>12</sup> There is no lack of criticism and reservations on the Conference and its results. See: Amoroso B. E Gallina A., The impact of the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Zone on the EU social cohesion and economic co-operation with the Wider Europe, Federico Caffè Center, Research Report 4/2001. It may be downloaded at: [www.ruc.dk/federico](http://www.ruc.dk/federico).

States. The contrary indications of Barcelona therefore went disregarded and it could not have been otherwise.

It is not difficult to realise that the wars in the Mediterranean are not Mediterranean wars, but the passage of a steam roller serving to open motorways for the passage of armoured vehicles towards the Far East and in particular China. This obviously upsets the geopolitical maps of the region along a warpath that winds around the Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and the Caucasus.

Moreover, the rift between the EU member states over participation in the war has violently unearthed the conflict between the two West: the West and the Atlantic European, following a dividing line that cuts Europe in two. For the former, the Mediterranean is a priority that, in spite of the ambiguities expressed by post-colonial type bonds and interior migrations, expresses the will to proceed along lines of cultural economic and political dialogue. For the latter, the Mediterranean is a residual phenomenon of an imperialist and imperial conception of global development that does not recognize any particular prerogative of sovereignty and independent development to this region and sub-areas.<sup>13</sup>

2. *Economic and financial partnership for an area of common prosperity*, to be put into effect by: a) the gradual realization of an area of free exchange between the countries of the EU and the 12 Countries of the southern shores; b) the realization of programs of cooperation and aid in agreed areas and fields; c) increased financial aid of the EU to the Mediterranean partner countries.

The Mediterranean countries of the south, after a period of economic “cures”, ordered and monitored by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, arrived at the Barcelona appointment. That is with their accounts in order, as the economists would say with satisfaction, even if mounting internal social conflict had rendered the results achieved “fragile”. Moreover, albeit not undervaluing the differences from country to country, it has been recognized that the majority of the Mediterranean countries of the south are equipped with the necessary fiscal and monetary instruments to connect to national economies and the global economy.

The successes and failures of the Barcelona process should therefore be read and evaluated by taking account the developments of globalization, the repercussions that this has produced on the composition of the very same European Union and on the new confrontations that it has generated within the single countries, of which it is necessary to take stock for a correct appraisal of

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13 Amoroso, Gallina, Gomez y Paloma, “Mediterraneo, economie, società e identità”, *INCHIESTA*, n. 141, July-September 2003, Dedalo, Bari. Amoroso, Gallina, Gomez y Paloma, “Mediterraneo, aree critiche del cambiamento: scambi, agricoltura, acqua, migrazioni”, *INCHIESTA*, n. 142, October-December 2003, Dedalo, Bari.

the facts. Over the entire scenario, looms the global clash that since 2001 has been opened at an international level between the countries of the Triad, led by the United States, and the rest of the world.

1950-1971	1972-1991	1992-1995	1995-2003	2003-
<b>Mediterranean Policy</b>	<b>Global Mediterranean Policy</b>	<i>Renewed Mediterranean Policy (RMP)</i>	The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP)	<i>The new European Neighbourhood Policy</i>
Special bilateral agreements of association and trade agreements of preferential statute having the objective of maintaining privileged relationships of aid and commercial exchange with former European colonies.	The Third Mediterranean countries were beneficiaries of policies set up towards the countries of the Third World. These were offered access to European markets for exports, forms of economic aid and development. The model was the same as that applied with the Lomé Convention for the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP).	The Mediterranean as a risk area and security problem on the southern borders of the EC. The concept of neighbourhood was introduced with a negative significance. The 130% increase in the funds foreseen for the MC (1992-1996) were reduced by the Council of Europe by 35% to be assigned in favour of the countries of central and eastern Europe.	The Mediterranean is recognized as the strategic area for Europe. The neighbourhood concept was transformed from risk areas to one of opportunity. The meso-regional dimension is seen as the answer to the challenge of globalization. The Barcelona Conference introduces the concept of multilateralism in the north-south relationships of the Mediterranean.	The Mediterranean disappears as the priority area of the European policies towards the outside and becomes part of the ensemble of countries that the EU indicates as strategic for its own ends of security and stability. A unilateral decision of the EU that re-introduces the bilateral and competitive criterion in the relationships between single countries and the EU.
POST-COLONIALISM	COOPERATION	CO-DEVELOPMENT	PARTNERSHIP "Rings of solidarity"	NEIGHBOURHOOD "Rings of friends"

A clash of civilization, between those who deny the right to life in its cultural variants, considering it the privilege of rich geographic areas and income levels ("acquired rights"), and the billions of people that are the object of this denial.

The Mediterranean is currently at the heart of this clash and our salvation (namely that of the billions) may depend on its ability to resist, that is to the extent that it will be able to delay or prevent the march of the western armies towards China.

The Mediterranean policies have been the field of elaboration and experimentation of the EU policies towards "third countries" since the fifties. A

short synthesis of this path may help us to arrive in an appropriate way to the current situation and to the conflicts and alternatives that this expresses. This is a conceptual and political path that has come about by winding along a variable geometry regarding the involved countries, to both the north as well as the south.

At its basis are various objective interpretations on what exactly the Mediterranean and its borders is, but also on the paths of institutional broadening of the EU, the phobias within this or that member country towards single countries, and finally the political conditioning imposed on the Union and the Mediterranean as a whole by external political and military intrusions, by the United States in particular.

For a detailed analysis of the European Union's Mediterranean policies, I refer to available studies on the argument.<sup>14</sup> In the following, it is useful to concentrate on the last phase of these policies, namely preceding and then accompanying the realization of the agreements of Barcelona contained in the Document.

An important aspect emerging from this pathway is the strong interweaving between European and Mediterranean policies, which confirms the indissoluble bond that exists in the present and future of these two global regions. In the final point, I will instead focus on the relationships between Europe and the Mediterranean, which are relationships between individuals and populations, whose history is in part reflected in the economic relationships and policies mentioned here but without coinciding with them, since they disentangle on largely different routes.

The future scenarios of the new Europe were set out by many parties on the day after the "collapse of the wall". The European Community, having overcome the division between East and West that had left it flattened out on a solely western and Atlantic dimension, could finally find its continental position again by unfolding itself to the North (Baltic), the East (central and eastern Europe) and to the South (the Mediterranean).

From the territorial point of view, one of the reports elaborated in those years on behalf of FAST Program of the European Community, directed by Riccardo Petrella, highlighted the importance of a co-development bond between the great European regions. An idea of Great Europe was then worked out, institutionally organized on a network of autonomous meso-regions, one of which was constituted by the European Community.

The logo of this construction, unlike the one proposed by the then president Jacques Delors of "concentric circles", comprising countries of various levels of integration, could have been that of the "Olympic circles", independent but connected by constraints representing "rings of solidarity" between the various European regions.

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<sup>14</sup> Amato, 1993.

The importance of the Mediterranean dimension appeared immediately obvious for the strategic value of this region, for the breadth and wealth of their societies and markets, for the construction of the “ring of Euro-Mediterranean solidarity” between the whole of the European countries and the ensemble of the Mediterranean countries in their three major areas: the Balkans, the Middle East and the Maghreb.

In that vision, the entire Arab World and Iran was comprised. There were two specificities that still exist today: Turkey and Israel. The former to be resolved with a reunion of Turkey and Greece in the European Community, and the latter as a problem of protecting minorities within the Arab world.<sup>15</sup>

A study produced by the German Akademie für Raumforschung Landeplanum (ARL) and the French Délégation à l'Aménagement du Territoire et à l'Action Régionale (DATAR) arrived at analogous results, contrasting the scenario of the “European banana” with that of a European system based on the major European and Mediterranean meso-regions.<sup>16</sup>

There were multiple consequences of this approach and on many of these there was strong convergence:

1) The North-South relationships in the Mediterranean were to be managed through dialogue between the European Community on one side and the sub-Mediterranean regions (Maghreb, the Balkans, Middle East) on the other, overcoming the old tradition of bilateral relationships aimed at creating fragmentation and division. Therefore, mutual recognition of territorial integrity and national sovereignty, rejection and opposition to every kind of external intrusion. Coherently with this objective, the European Union has repeatedly asserted the concept and the practice of (meso-) regional dialogue, namely among large regional aggregates precisely to overcome the limits of the old bilateral national approach.

2) Starting up a great dialogue between Europe and the Arab World, in its various articulations, as the main reference framework. The political path was a gradual broadening to the North of the European Community up to and including all the European countries, and of a gradual widening of the relationships to the South to include the rest of the Arab countries in Euro-Mediterranean co development, as far as Iran.

3) The objective of co-development was pursued with growing cooperation between various areas, that is integrating the diversities, but in order to enhance and strengthen them not to cancel them out. The unity of social, cultural, political and military strategies objectives, often recalled also in the Barcelona documents, was to serve to move away from the logic of reading and intervening in the Mediterranean prompted by emergencies (emigration, environment,

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15 Amoroso B., Infante D., Gomez y Paloma S., Perrone N. (ed.) *Marginalization, Specialization and Cooperation in the Baltic and Mediterranean Regions: Synthesis Report*, FOP 343, FAST MONITOR, DG XII, EC. Brussels 1993).

16 Treuner P. and Foucher M. *Towards a New European Space*, ARL/DATAR, Hannover, 1995.

conflicts, oil, etc.) in order to create a reference framework over the medium and long term.

The agreement reached at the Barcelona Conference between the countries of the European Community and the 12 countries of the southern shores was presented as the first step towards a widening of the agreement to the entire Mediterranean region.

These lines of thought were formally approved at Barcelona in 1995, but then disregarded and misrepresented in successive years. What has been affirmed is a different direction. The process of co-development of the European Union to the North with the formation of a Baltic Region with own institutions, has been replaced with the integration of the countries of northern Europe and of the Balkan area in the same European Union.

This has introduced elements of division in this region, with Norway remaining outside the Union, and a position of partial adhesion by Denmark and Sweden, still outside the system of the Euro and severely divided within.

The same line has been adopted by the central European countries, whose co-optation in the European Union is a clumsy attempt to fill the identity gap that has been created with the “fall of the wall” with an idea of Europe cloned on the image of “westernism”.

An inconsistent attempt since it is difficult to fill a void with nothing, and that already proves at odds with the indications supplied by the European Union given the Atlantic choice made by these countries on occasion of the war against Iraq.

European integration has been extended to comprise the Balkans, where it has favoured the disintegration of the Yugoslav federation, and tendencies to integrate single countries of the southern shores (Israel, but also Morocco and Tunisia) in the European block have emerged with devastating effects for the internal cohesion of these areas.

The process of regional integration of sub Mediterranean regions has been reverted by introducing elements of division between the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (with prejudicial questions on Libya and Algeria), and the cooperation of the countries of the Middle East.

Therefore, a conception has been asserted for the South that has restricted its framework to the countries of the “Mediterranean shores”, cancelling the North-African and Arab world context, and instead making the priorities and the importance of two countries emerge (Turkey and Israel), supported by the strategic-military interests of the United States.

Finally, the articulation of the process of “co-development”, by definition a multidimensional phenomenon, has been reduced, as regards the economy, to the creation of the “free trade area” and therefore to economic integration in the strictest sense, and in the cultural-institutional dialogue following the formulation of the catechism on “human rights” and “democracy” ratified on western constitutions.

The failure of the Barcelona process arose therefore from here: from affirming the strategic interests of capitalist globalization in Europe and the

Mediterranean, whose two greatest burdens are the liberist policies in the economy and the American military presence. The ten years of applying the policies envisaged by the Barcelona process today allow analyzing the results achieved in detail.

### **The appraisal of the Barcelona process**

The Mediterranean countries arrived at the Barcelona encounter after a decade of Structural Adjustment Policies imposed on them by the institutions of globalization (WB and IMF).

The results of these policies are not lacking. Most countries presented the renowned “budget parameters” in order; indeed some received the award of “best pupils” of the IMF. However, the economic achievements of these accounting measures were late in coming while an increasing social and political destabilization has arrived punctually. The unsolved problems were:

- (i) the high degree of dependency on the outside, manifested with the fluctuation of energy prices and the slowing down of the growth of western countries and of the same Europe to which they hoped to link up with;
- (ii) national economic systems with limited home markets and lacking strong endogenous dynamic. In addition to the weak link coupling these markets to the countries of the northern shores of the Mediterranean, there was a very weak south-south interchange;
- (iii) insufficient levels of investment (inferior to 3% annually) which the passage to a greater quota of private investments with respect to public investment had substantially not modified;
- (iv) unsustainable levels of youth unemployment without prospects of resolution in the short and medium period.

Moreover, the MPs, although placed above the poverty line of many African countries, were only slightly above the lower line of the intermediate group of countries, with the obvious exception of Israel. The gap between the GNP growth rates of the MPs and the Countries of the EU continued to grow in spite of co-development policies.

The proposal of the Barcelona process was therefore seen as a new possibility to re-launch the economies and the Mediterranean communities that, by combining some of the sermons on liberalization and privatization of a neo-liberist kind with structural strategies regarding the re-launch of investments and Euro-Mediterranean markets, could offer new pathways to restart the economies.

The envisaged method offered the possibility for the achievement of positive results. First of all, the chosen “multilateral” approach, different therefore from the previous EU policies but also from those of the international



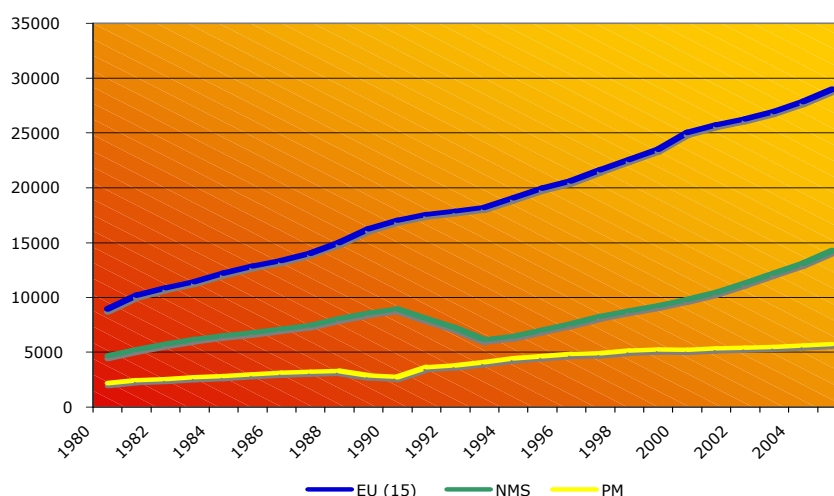
organizations, had the objective of realizing a regional entity by means of economic, social and political progress.

The interventions to be adopted envisaged:

- (i) the realization of conditions of stability for the setting up of social and economic reforms;
- (ii) the gradual creation of efficient production systems, favoured both by a new industrial and economic environment as well as by the institution of a free trade area. The objectives were both a greater opening of the markets of the south, with the abandonment of rigidly protectionist norms, as well as the wider opening of European markets, for industrial as well as agricultural products over which the EU maintained rigidly protective measures. The structural adjustment plans were to stimulate these processes;
- (iii) Limit the social impact of this transformation by taking care of the “social costs” and the impact on people.<sup>17</sup>

The balance of the course of the first 10 years of enacting the Barcelona agreement has been made allowing us to see the results and draw certain consequences.

Figure 1: Evolution of GNP per capita 1980-2005



Source: Femise, 2005. WEO, April 2004. Geutat I. and F. Serranito, (2003), “Using Panel Unit Root Tests to Evaluate the Income Convergence Hypothesis in Middle East and North Africa Countries”, ERF conference, Marrakech.

The situation of income of the MPs is substantially unchanged and this has been possible thanks only to the flows of income transferred by emigrants to their own families. The leap ahead that Barcelona had promised has not taken place. The differences of yield between the MPs, the New Member States of the

<sup>17</sup> Femise 2005, p. viii

Union (NMS) and the countries of the EU continue to grow with a notable acceleration since 1995, despite the Partnership (Fig. 1).

This is happening in the framework of an envisaged request of about 40 million new jobs during the next 15 years, to be added to the already present impressive employment deficit.

The key indications that this outline produces indicate that the dimensions of the still existing imbalances are such that a change at a partnership level is needed. Without a program and an overall progression, both of the countries and the markets but also of the sectors and the institutions involved, it is impossible to generate the necessary overall dynamics.

One of the more highly emphasized objectives, that of liberalising and opening up the markets, has encountered strong resistance by the EU, which has hindered the liberalization of agricultural products by putting into effect an: “arsenal of legislation that renders access to its markets more difficult”.<sup>18</sup>

In the Femise Report cited here, access to the markets of developed countries, and the countries of the EU among these, have become more difficult and active and creative efforts have been made in order to augment these barriers. The medium level of customs duties between the MPs diminished in the period under examination by approximately 11%, but still remains at 17%, that is among the highest if compared with other world areas. At the same time, the protective measures as a whole in the Euro-Mediterranean zone have increasingly become “non-tariff”.

This entirely western vice of preaching the liberalization of products over which it has a competitive advantage, thanks to the abundance of capital, but using protectionism in those productive fields where other countries have the productive advantage of the abundance of labour, reveals all its logical inconsistency and can only be sustained through impositions and forced relationships.

In the specific detail of the Euro-Mediterranean relationships, there still persists an asymmetric relationship between the North and South, since the trade of the MPs is 7% of the foreign trade of the EU, while the EU receives 50% of exports of the MPs. The strongest trade ties with the EU are those with the Maghreb countries, which have become strengthened, while the relationships with the Middle East are weaker and this tendency has been further reinforced. The balance of payments of the EU, already in advantage at the beginning of the period, has been strongly reinforced (net of oil imports).

An important indicator to evaluate the quality of these tendencies is the trend of the productive specializations, often denounced in the past as an exchange relationship of “arms for oil”, “natural products with low added value for advanced technological products”.

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<sup>18</sup>*Ibidem* p. viii

In this context, the good news is that the MPs are maintaining their export quota on the European markets, despite the growing competition from other areas, but their weakness with respect to the new member states of the EU remains for the lack of specialization, industrial cooperation, and diversification of products.<sup>19</sup>

Precisely where there are easier possibilities for the increment of activities and levels of specialization, for instance in the service sector (tourism and trade), there is still no improvement nor any pronounced interest of foreign investments in this area.

The area of “greatest worry” is that of direct foreign investments (DFI). The Femise Report notes that the 15 MPs have received, with the sole exception of Tunisia, favoured perhaps by specific phenomena such as the embargo against Libya, a slightly higher amount of FDI than that received by Poland alone in the observed period.

On this crucial aspect in order to face problems of productive restructuring and infrastructure, taking account however of the low level of financial commitment of the EU aid to these countries, it is fundamental to point out the possible causes of the delay.

Among these are the weakness of the internal market due to insufficient income policies and a too slow creation of middle classes, reflecting the low salaries in the fields of services and public administration; the weak anchorage of these economies in those European countries too engaged in disputing tariff problems and public contributions instead of engaging in managerial initiatives able to renew or to create the entire fabric of a network of north-south productive relationships, therefore involving more countries and producers from the south, along the chains of added value and the production sectors; the absence of “platforms of services for businesses” that constitute the landing points for potentially interested entrepreneurs in those areas. All this demands the overcoming of useless intermediation structures whose professionalization, from the point of view of the vocation of operators involved and their qualifications, is an obstacle and not an aid in reaching the objectives.

The major problem of the South-South relationships and cooperation, which was among the themes at the heart of the Barcelona process, has not found encouraging answers. The few existing initiatives in this field, like the Agadir Agreements between Morocco, Jordan, Tunisia and Egypt, are still being ratified. An exception to all this is Syria, but with trade with neighbours that does not exceed 10% of its total exports.

At the same time, the countries of the south, influenced by the culture and ideology of the international bodies and the EU, have exchanged the problems of good government that is of participation and good administration of the common goods of their countries and citizens, for problems of governance demanded by European and international institutions. These, in turn, exchange the foundations

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<sup>19</sup>*Ibidem*, p. 9

of democracy with formal problems of procedural and bookkeeping transparency and prefer instead to deal with strong international lobbies rather than with the difficult and complicated mosaic of local power structures.

If attention is focused on the social and cultural aspects, the few positive factors are those created on the extension of the policies instituted before 1995 with the programs of horizontal cooperation that involved universities, institutions and businesses.

The renowned Med-Campus, Med-Urbs, Med-Invest programs and so on, characterized both by the scarcity of resources at their disposition, as well as the bureaucratic, “police-like” obstacles imposed on the partners under the aegis of transparency, of corruption, etc. have fallen into oblivion. The programs have nearly always been abruptly interrupted and whose funding has been redirected from “civil society” to projects contracted directly with governments and big business.

That emigration was to become a disruptive phenomenon in this context had been foreseen and arrived right on time. Horizontal programs of cooperation outside the official channels and Euro-Mediterranean programs, migrations and remittances of emigrants that very much exceed by entity and effectiveness the FDI and the funding of the EU, are among the factors that have developed alongside the Barcelona process. These have really contributed to create those “rings of solidarity” with respect to which the subsidiarity of official interventions envisaged by co-development policies has proved marginal and often bankrupt.

### ***Co-development and rings of solidarity in the Mediterranean***

The analytical outline that I choose in order to draw some conclusions from the argument developed up to this point considers “co-development” a useful concept to define the policies of government, of institutions and of the major economic and social players.

Co-development is thus considered an objective of common growth by means of a political agreement that creates an articulated dynamics of emancipation of all the partners.

Co-development is therefore the area of policies that must carry organizations and institutions ahead. This can come about by means of the study of the production sectors, the channels of production, distribution and consumption that in the entire Mediterranean territory are able to individuate strangulation or expropriation of income and profit by the “strong” groups.

The first objective of co-development is the study of these circuits of production and incomes in order to put an end to the forms of exploitation and expropriation of incomes that are unjustifiable in terms of productive and social

commitment. An in-depth and abundant survey of cases is contained in the VI Report on the Mediterranean to which I must defer for brevity reasons.<sup>20</sup>

The second objective of co-development is the strengthening and the discovery of sections of production-distribution-consumption at a regional dimension that realize all the positive effects of synergy and cooperation for the benefit of the numerous units participating in the process.

Today this is the task of research that a cooperative relationship between Mediterranean universities and economic and social players could contribute to create. Consider the effects of a production section of the olive, or the tomato, or of fruit and vegetables in general, that would ensure the use of climate variations along the South-North axis of the Mediterranean and that could, in such a way, break the monopoly that the countries of the north have amassed together in these sectors. This they have achieved through artificial production favoured by low energy prices offered to them by the very countries of the south at the expense of their own productions.

Co-development also involves the synergic creation of research centres that protect local production, favouring their modernization along lines of environmental, social and productive sustainability and emancipating them from the parasitic grip imposed by research and the centres the northern countries.

Euro-Mediterranean programs and scientific cooperation must have this orientation and not the search for excellence that has the sole effect of strengthening the dependency and the presence of the countries of the North and their Academies in the countries of the South.

For this reason, it has been said and written that the Mediterranean and Europe do not need the “knowledge society”, proposed and imposed by the United States in order protect their own “comparative advantages”, but rather the understanding of their own societies, needs and available resources.

## **Partnership and “rings of solidarity”**

The awakening of Mediterranean and European societies, the paths of their emancipation from the “dandy” of market capitalism, is a process that is carried out, day by day, thanks to the “molecular” commitment of people from these countries, to their ability to react to adversity and find solutions and ways out from the blind alleys in which attempts are continually made to enclose them in.

The basis of these processes, a resistant mesh to every formalization and institutionalization of the relationships, to every attempt of cloning people by means of “citizenship” and “rights”, is supplied by the first level of the communities, from the first circle of the solidarity, namely family relationships and friendships. A circle in which affections and friendly relationships

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<sup>20</sup>Centro Federico Caffè. *VI rapporto sul Mediterraneo, Economie Mediterranee. Sistemi produttivi tradizionali e di nuova formazione in 10 paesi della riva sud*. CNEL Roma, 2002.

predominate, two great things that cannot be reduced to the logic of the market or the rationality of politics.

The second circle is represented by the communities of belonging, not always formally recognised or recognizable, but which are constituted by the quarters, the village and by the ensemble of social relationships between persons. From these community structures originate the flows of emigration that are able to penetrate all the control meshes of states and armies, and the strong money flows of the workers' "remittances", incomparably higher than the aid supplied by international organizations and private foreign investments.

These allow the survival of community in the most various places of the planet that would otherwise be deserted, as happened with the Italian agricultural policies for Southern Italy, and then resumed with equal vigour and malice by European Agricultural Policies (the CAP).

Numerous economic initiatives and forms of cooperation are also being born from these bonds that re-establish environments of life and production in the places where otherwise desolation and the desert would prevail. They are important facts, known to anyone travelling in the Mediterranean who abandons the fruitless meetings of academic conferences and organized visits by the embassies, in order to lose oneself among the dunes populated by the local populations and where at times it is possible to encounter eager local and European non-governmental organizations.

In a recently published essay<sup>21</sup>, among the ten proposals of Mediterranean co- development, what emerges most is that of the collective remittances of emigrants and the bonds of solidarity that these can create with non-governmental organizations of the European countries.<sup>22</sup>

In the Mediterranean in 2003, the remittances of the migrant workers were higher than the total help from the EU and loans of the European Investment Bank in the region over the last 10 years. Most of the flows are small personal sums that support families left in the country of origin and guarantee a kind of insurance in case the migratory plan should fail. But there are collective forms of investment by immigrants coming from the southern shores that are becoming increasingly diffused (Figure 2).

As an example, some regions of southern Morocco - near Tarouddant - have benefited from investments in infrastructures (rural electrification, roads, water) made with the savings of immigrants in France. This has stimulated the creation of associations of villages and local NGOs.

Today, after completing the infrastructure, the local NGOs have begun to invest the collective remittances in projects of women's cooperatives for the production of argan oil and saffron. In a similar way, a group of Moroccan immigrants in Spain has managed with the aid of local NGOs to mobilise funds

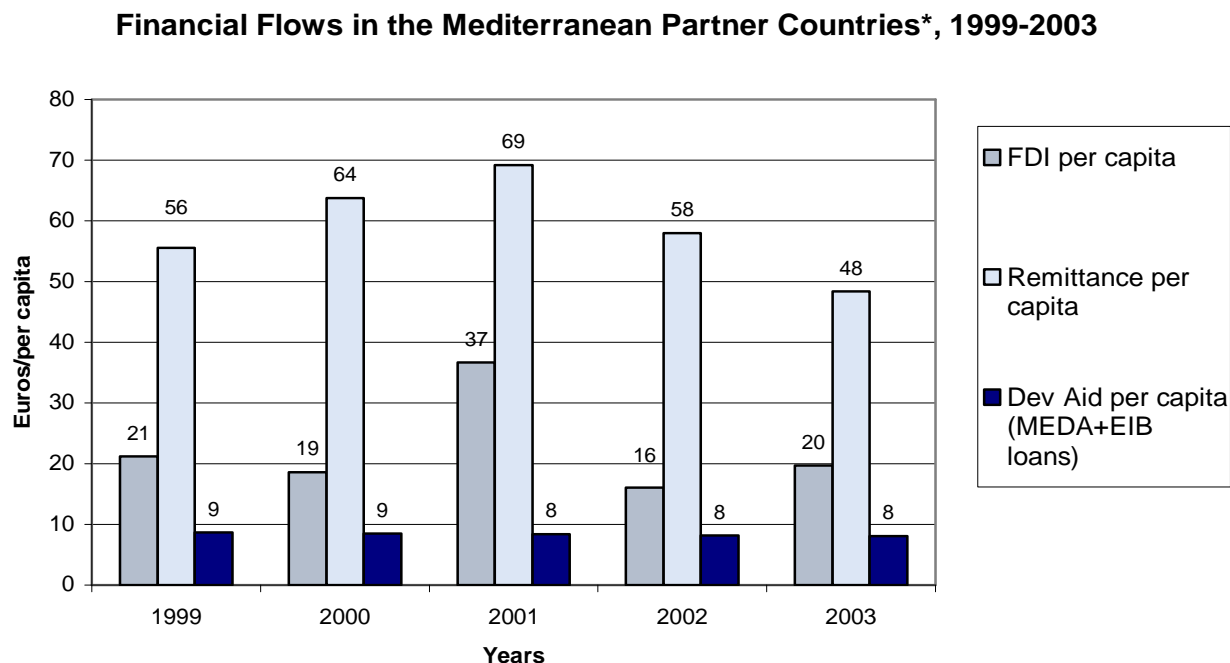
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<sup>21</sup> A. Gallina,

<sup>22</sup> Andrea Gallina, 2005, *Economie Mediterranee. Tra Globalizzazione e Integrazione Meso-regionale*, Oasi Città Aperta, Troina.

for the rural development and irrigation of a zone near Al Hoceima (in the north of Morocco) (Gallina, 2005).

Figure 2



Gallina A. (2006) Remittances in the Euro-Mediterranean Corridors, *F. Caffè Centre Research Reports*, 2/2006, Roskilde.

\*Mediterranean Partners Countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Turkey. The Palestinian National Authority is not included for lack of data; Israel is not because is considered a developed country.

There is a strange rhetoric and contradiction in the programs of the European EU and the nation states towards the countries of the south. These countries are criticized for the absence of democracy due to the absence of participation and civil society. But when it is discovered that there is participation and civil society, often in conflict with the very national institutions with which the EU and the states nourish close relationships, it is refused to recognize them.

The civil society, or part of it, is landing on our coasts and instead of receiving it as liberators, both ours and theirs, we are pushing back to the sea or to the countries of origin. A dilemma that only the European people can resolve in the same way as the civil society of the south: turning our backs on the mechanisms of control and citizenship that constitute the basis of the apartheid on which our “welfare” is based.

The future of the Mediterranean, the direction that the Mediterranean policies should take, is that of rejoining co-development with the initiatives

created by the “rings of the solidarity”, namely with the most alive and active forms of the civil society of these countries.

But to cap it all, there is the need for a clarification at the root that Europe must make with the Mediterranean. This concerns acknowledging that the relationship with the communities and the countries of this meso-region passes through a direct and privileged dialogue with the Arab world.

Every attempt to ignore this fact, adopting privileged and direct ethnic or religious minorities as interlocutors (as in the case of Israel or the Lebanon) in order to weaken or to destabilize the Arab world, is destined to fail and to prolong the actual state of crisis and war.

## **Conclusion**

The new European Neighbourhood Policy is a “stab in the eye” for all objectives and policies that we have been discussing to date. In the presented scheme, the area of political intervention (co development) and that of the society as a whole (the rings of solidarity), have fed a process of European integration on a meso-regional basis that has often been able to innovatively join the objective of internal social cohesion of the single countries and of the Union with that of cooperation with the near countries.

In such a way, the limits that the concentric structure imposed on the European Union by the choices of Delors, that envisaged successive layers of concentric circles with their progressive peripherization being developed around the strong nucleus of the Union, has been overcome with a polycentric approach.

Examples are the growth of the Baltic Region that has managed to include the countries to north and East by means of an immense net of relationships, and also the commitment of some European countries to undertake initiatives towards the Mediterranean. A system of polycentric type Olympic circles that has prompted the same EU to open up in several directions has, as a matter of fact, been superimposed on the concentric circle system institutionalized by the EU.

Today, with the proposal of the European Neighbourhood Policy, supported by Prodi since 2003, the axe has come down on this polycentric tendency of the EU, and an insurmountable border has been imposed between the countries within the concentric area and all the “others”. In Prodi’s words, in fact, from now on Europe will be able to share everything but the institutions (which means therefore excluding new inclusions) and a criterion of bilateral relationships guided by strategic political criteria will be pursued towards the countries outside the “wall”, which, as may be understood from the context and the agenda of Europe, will be primarily dominated by the economic and military interests of the EU.

This therefore “cuts” the meso-regional initiatives to the north of Europe, forcing a separation from the countries outside of the EU, and the same thing is



happening in the Mediterranean. Here, where a north-south dialogue remains, this will be instrumental and prevent any hope for forms of strategic collaboration within the respective areas of belonging.

The Neighbourhood Policy is therefore, in my opinion, the September 11 of the polycentric development strategies and the creation of plurinational communities (Mediterranean, Baltic, Central Europe, etc.). For this reason, it should be fought with the same tenacity, albeit with other means, by which the West reacted to September 11.

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